
LESSON 9

MEF OPERATIONAL FIRES

Battles are won by superiority of fires.

-- Frederick the Great, 1768

It is firepower, and firepower that arrives at the right time and place that counts in the modern war.

-- B. H. Liddell Hart
Thoughts On War, 1944

A superiority of fire, and therefore, a superiority in directing and delivering fire and in making use of fire, will become the main factors upon which the efficiency of a force will depend.

-- Marshall of France Ferdinand Foch
Precepts and Judgments, 1919

Introduction

Purpose

This lesson

- Provides some insight into the overall concept of firepower as a battlespace function. It is important that you take from this lesson an appreciation of how you, as the commander, incorporate fires into the integrated "single battle" operational planning.
- Ascertains the aspects of MAGTF fire support and the considerations the MEF commander must make in fighting and shaping the deep battle, as well as those assets available to the GCE commander to fight and win the MEF's close or decisive battle. This subject focuses on force fires at the MEF level, as it is more comprehensive and diverse than the fire support requirements at the division, regiment, and battalion levels. Both the Force Fires Coordination Center (FFCC) and the Fire Support Coordination Center (FSCC) are concerned with the organization, planning, coordination, and employment of all attack systems available to the MEF.

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Introduction, Continued

**Why Study
MEF/
Operational
Fires**

Your ultimate role as a commander is to force your will upon your enemy. The way to do this is to array your weapons systems in such a manner that you are able to bring a tremendous volume of reflective fire on those enemy forces so that he is compelled to your will or be destroyed. Fire, or the threat of fire, is your instrument to accomplish your mission. This lesson addresses how you, as the MEF commander, can best organize and employ all of your firepower assets to achieve your mission objectives.

**Relationship
to Other
Instruction**

The force fires and fire support coordination concepts, introduced in this lesson will be reinforced throughout the remainder of this course and are applicable to amphibious, offensive, and defensive MAGTF operations. This lesson ties in with *MAGTF Operations* (8807) and *Amphibious Operations* (8808) on Battlespace Functions, Maneuver Control, and Fire Support Graphics, Fighting the ACE, Targeting, and Naval Surface Fire Support. Battlespace functions (BSF), integrated planning, and the single battle concept will be covered in more detail in the *Marine Corps Planning Process* (8805) course.

Study Time

This lesson, including the issues for consideration, will require about 3 hours of study.

Educational Objectives

Fundamentals	Understand the fundamentals of the employment of fire support.
Fire Support	Comprehend the organization and fire support capabilities at the GCE level to gain an understanding of how force fires relate to and differ from fire support coordination.
MEF Level Fires	Understand MEF level fires, as well as the roles of the MEF Commander and the FFCC have in targeting and shaping the deep battle.
Battlespace Function	Examine the concept of fires as a BSF and the role operational fires play in the MEF single battle and joint operations. [JPME 3(c) and 5(c)]
Weapons	Understand the capabilities and limitations of Marine Corps artillery weapons and considerations for integrating the Army's Multiple Launch Rocket System (MLRS) support into MEF operations. [JPME 1(a), 1(b), and 3(c)]
JPME Areas/ Objectives/Hours (accounting data)	1/a/.5 1/b/.5 3/c/.2 5/c/.1

Discussion

Battlespace Function "Firepower"

As a battlespace function, "firepower" is the organization, planning, coordination, and employment of all weapon systems, to include joint systems available to the MEF.

Fire Support Assets

The various fire support assets that are organized and employed are far more important factors than numbers alone. The MEF commander has a variety of organic fire support assets, to include both fixed and rotary wing air, artillery, mortars, electronic warfare (EW), and naval gunfire that can be brought to bear to shape the battlefield. In addition, there are a variety of other fire support assets, both lethal and nonlethal, that may be employed.

For example, there is a Memorandum of Agreement between the U.S. Army and Marine Corps to provide the Army's Multiple Launch Rocket Systems (MLRS) to augment the Marine Corps' general support artillery.

Operational Fires

Operational fires are joint by nature. They are the application of lethal and nonlethal firepower to achieve a decisive impact on the conduct of the campaign or major operation. Thorough understanding of the concept of fires, the full range of capabilities and limitations, and how the synchronization of fires can be applied with synergistic effectiveness is fundamental to operational planning and warfighting.

Elements of Battlespace Function "Firepower"

Ensure you study the following elements of battlespace function (BSF) "firepower":

- Fires
 - Maneuver
 - Protect
 - Intelligence
 - Combat Service Support (CSS) and personnel support
 - C² support
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Discussion, Continued

Definition of Fires

Fires can be defined as the amount of fire which may be delivered by a position or unit, or weapon system; **and** as the ability to deliver fire.

Fires are but one of the BSFs. It is important in support of other BSFs. It also depends on the others to do its mission. The means of employment include:

Means	Effect	Type
Lethal	Kills people and breaks things	wConventional
		wArtillery
		wBombs
		wRockets
		wSpecial Operations Forces (SOF)
		wDirect Action SF
		wA-Team
		wSea, Air, Land (SEAL) teams
		wMEU Special Operations Capable (SOC)
		wNuclear, biological chemicals (NBC)
		wElectronic Warfare (EW)
		wJamming
Nonlethal	Effective because they are supported by lethal means	wPsychological Warfare (PSYOPS)
		wOthers

Types of Fires

Frequent reference is made to two specific types of fires. Joint Pub 1-02 defines them as follows:

- **Fire Support** - Assistance to elements of the ground forces engaged with the enemy rendered by other firing units, including (but not limited to) artillery, mortars, naval gunfire, close air support, and close-in fire support.
- **Interdiction Fires** - An action to divert, disrupt, delay, or destroy the enemy's surface military potential before it can be used effectively against friendly forces.

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Discussion, Continued

Definition of Operational Fires

Fires at the operational level are distinctly different from that at the tactical level. It is important that you understand the differences between the two.

Operational Fires

Operational fires can be defined as the application of lethal and nonlethal firepower to achieve a decisive impact on the conduct of the campaign.

General Tasks of Operational Fires

There are three general tasks of operational fires. Operational fires focus largely on one or more of these tasks. Look at each individual task below and understand the function and damages that each task causes:

- Facilitate the maneuver
- Create exploitable gaps
- Conserve forces' combat power
- Put combat forces in position to fight

- Isolate the battlefield
- Interdict uncommitted forces
- Attack enemy reserves
- Curtail enemy freedom of movement

- Destroy critical enemy functions
- Attack vital functions
- Exploit critical vulnerabilities
- Degrade or eliminate critical capabilities
- Focus on center(s) of gravity

Fundamentals of Operational Fires

Study the fundamentals of operational fires and learn what they mean to the MEF/JTF commander:

- Command involvement
- Mission focus
- Unity of effort
- Aggressive intelligence
- Timeliness

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Discussion, Continued

High Value and Payoff Targets

Study the difference between high value targets and high payoff targets and understand how each are viewed from your perspective as commander.

High Value vs High Payoff

- **High value targets** - Capabilities that impact on the success of the enemy mission.
- **High payoff targets** - Capabilities that impact on the success of the friendly mission.
- **High payoff target list** - Identifies high payoff targets for a specific point.

Targeting Considerations

Targeting considerations for high value and payoff targets include

- Rules of engagement
- Law of war
- Media
- Campaign phases
- Desired end-state

MEF Level Fires

MEF level fires and operational fires have two primary functions:

- Plan for fires
- Integrate fires with other battlespace functions
- Establish MEF priorities
- Allocate resources
- Request joint resources
- Deliberate targeting of critical targets
- Coordinate fires
- Fire support coordinating measures (FSCMs)
- Adjacent units
- FFCC
- Reactive targeting

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Discussion, Continued

Organic Fires

Operational fires organic to the MEF include

- Air operations
 - Interdiction
 - Suppression operations
 - Counterair operations
 - Ground-based operations
 - Limited SOF - MEU (SOC)
 - Nonlethal fires
 - Electronic warfare (EW)
 - Riot control agents (RCA)
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Available Fires

Operational fires available to the MEF include

- Maritime operations
 - Ground
 - Joint air
 - SOF direct action
 - Nuclear/chemical
 - Nonlethal fires
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Fighting with MEF Level Fires

Fighting with MEF level fires includes

- Working within the concepts of
 - Battlespace functions
 - Battlespace geometry/single battle to provide the MEF commander with a warfighting tool
 - MEF focusing on the deep operations/prospective plans
 - Targeting
 - 3D methodology (decide, detect, deliver)
 - MEF integrated prioritized targets
 - MEF targeting board
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Discussion, Continued

Fighting with Fires

Consider the following when fighting with fires:

- The MEF commander is the key player in planning fires that support his or her single battle.
- The MEF focuses fires that can either shape or be decisive in support of its concept.
- The MEF must ensure a coordinated targeting effort.
- The MEF targets are the direct result of integrated planning.

MEF Fires in the Single Battle

The MEF is responsible for all of these areas in the single battle concept:

- Deep operations
- Close operations
- Rear operations

Single Battle

The MEF is responsible for the entire single battle. Its main role in shaping the battlefield facilitates the close fight. However, the GCE is frequently the principle element in the close, decisive battle. In a linear battle, the GCE is the element that frequently fights the close battle. On the other hand, there are times when the ACE is the principle element in the close battle. Look for examples of these in your readings.

Definition of Decisive Operations

Decisive operations can be defined as an action or series of actions that achieve a significant advantage over the enemy, ideally occurring when and where the commander chooses.

Additional Research

In your readings, look for MEF fires in deep operations, MEF's role in close operations, and GCE support capabilities and limitations.

Concepts of Critical Elements

Critical Elements

When fighting with fires, all services must use whatever tools possible to accomplish the mission. Some services are better suited than others. There are various assets available to the MEF commander when fighting with MEF level fires which you must know in order to complete the mission. The critical elements are as follows:

Element	Role/Function
Commander 's Roles and Responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Issues guidance• Defines mission• Determines intent• Assigns missions/units• Sets objectives• Provides deliberate planning• Planning guidance• Intent for shaping• MEF Targeting Board• Daily targeting guidance• Apportionment decision• Deals with the JFC• Top Down Fire Planning• Operational fires reflects the JTF/MEF focus• Evolves from commander's guidance and concept of operations• Targets priorities• Allocates apportionment guidance• Uses nonorganic assets• Formulates and disseminates plan
Shaping Concept	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Disrupts• Delays• Diverts• Dislocates• Destroys• Deceives

Targeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acquires targets • Maintains target information • Future operations proponent for targeting • Hosts and sponsors MEF Target Board • MEF Integrated Prioritized Target List (MIPTL)
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Concepts of FFCC

Force Fires Coordination Center

The Force Fires Coordination Center (FFCC) is a functional element that falls under the MEF G-3. It provides centralized targeting, coordination, and integration of fires delivered in support of the MEF. Study each of the sections and their relationships with other sections in the MEF.

Force Fire Control Center

Force Fire Control Center			
Section	Role	Required Personnel	
		Active O/E	Rostered O/E
Force Fires Coordinator	Coordinate fires	2/1	
Target Information Section	Coordinates with the G-2 Target Intelligence Section	1/3	2/3
Plans Section	wPrepares the fire support plan wCoordinates and integrates fires into all prospective plans	M: 2/1 N: 1/0	1/1
Fires Section	wCoordinates fires with all current operations wWorks with G-3 to integrate Reactive fires when needed	M: 2/4 N: 1/0	3/5
O = Officers E = Enlisted		M = Marines N = Navy	

Required Readings

FMFM Readings

FMFM 2-7, *Fire Support in Marine Air-Ground Task Force Operations*, chapter 1, pp. 1-1 to 1-8; chapter 2, pp. 2-1 to 2-7; chapter 3, pp. 3-1 to 3-8; and chapter 4, pp. 4-1 to 4-6. Find this reading in the *FMFM Readings* (8800), pp. 139 to 151.

- Chapter 1 gives you an overview of the fire support system and the responsibilities in regards to the CE, GCE, and ACE.
 - Chapter 2 covers the fire support means available to the commander and the employment of those means.
 - Chapter 3 guides you through the fundamentals for employment of the fire support.
 - Chapter 4 gives you information on the coordination of fire support and the different agencies involved.
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The Marine Air- Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Readings

Hughes, Edward L., (Maj., USA). "Army MLRS Support for Marines." *Field Artillery*. February 1995, pp. 14 to 17. Find this reading in the *The Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Readings*, Annex F, pp. F-3 to F-6. This article guides you through the tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTP) required to integrate an Army MLRS unit into a MAGTF.

For Further Study

Supplemental Reading

The reading listed is **not** required. It is provided as a recommended source of additional information about topics in this lesson that may interest you. It will increase your knowledge and augment your understanding of this lesson.

The Targeting Process, Appendix B, pp. B-1 to B-13.

References

The following references are **not** required. These references were used to address the topics presented in the lesson. They are included for your review as needed.

- Joint Pub 3-0, *Doctrine for Joint Operations*.
 - FMFM 6-18, *Techniques and Procedures for Fire Support Coordination Measures*.
 - FMFM 2-7-1, *Fire Support Coordination by the MAGTF Command Element*.
 - FMFM 5-4, *Close Air Support and Close-In Fire Support*.
 - FMFM 6-9, *Marine Artillery Support*.
 - FM 6-20, *Fire Support in the Air/Land Battle*.
 - FM 6-20-10/MCRP 3-1.6.14, *The Targeting Process*.
 - FM 6-20-30, *Fire Support for Corps and Division Operations*.
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Issues for Consideration

Fires and Fire Support

What is the difference between "fires" and "fire support"?

Assets

Other than organic fire support assets, what other assets are potentially available to the MEF commander for force fires?

GCE FSCCs and MEF FFCC

What is the difference between the GCE FSCCs and the MEF FFCC?

Operational Fires

How can operational fires be synergistically employed on the battlefield?

Army MLRS

What advantages do the Army's MLRS bring to the MEF? How would MLRS be employed and what type of command relationship would you use?
